

To Bureau of the Budget  
Bulletin No. 57-3

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON FEDERAL REPORTS  
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.  
Washington 6, D. C.

July 19, 1956

RECOMMENDATION

1. The following mandatory standards be established for all federal agencies:

EVERY FEDERAL AGENCY, in the promulgation of rules and regulations that require the public to retain records, shall include in every such rule and regulations:

a. A fixed number of years, preferably not more than six years from a clearly defined starting date (such as the birth of the record, completion of initial audit, etc.), after which time the agency shall not require the specified records to be retained.

b. A definition of the records to which the retention requirements apply, it being understood that records which are not included within the scope of such definition may be disposed of at the discretion of the holder.

c. Authorization to the holder of records required to be retained to substitute for such specified records, after the expiration of the first two years of the retention period, copies obtained by photographing, microfilming, or other permanent reproducing processes.

Provided that in exceptional cases, and for good cause, an agency may require longer specified retention of such specialized and narrowly defined classes of record.

Provided further that when investigation by any agency indicates that a company or member of the public should be required to retain for a period of investigation, enforcement activity, audit, or litigation certain selected records, the investigation and enforcement agency has the responsibility and shall identify to the member of the public or company the narrow classes of records which it requires the member of the public or company to retain until completion of the investigation, enforcement activity, audit, or litigation.

2. The standards established in (1) above be applied when forms or requirements are up for renewal.

3a. With respect to all rules and regulations currently in effect that require the public to retain records, every federal agency should be requested to review such rules and regulations and promulgate such amendments as may be necessary to bring them into conformity with the standards established in (1) above.

3b. With respect to superseded regulations and regulations of agencies no longer in existence, the Bureau of the Budget should cause an investigation to be made with the objective of bringing such record retention requirements into conformity with the standards established in (1) above.

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Carrying out this program I assume that you will make maximum use of the advisory services of the Advisory Council on Federal Relations and its various specialized committees. You will also wish to consult freely with the affected Federal agencies and when appropriate with the General Services Administration. You are authorized and directed to issue such circulars or other instructions as you may find useful in carrying out this assignment.

I should like to receive from you by September 30, 1956, a report of your progress together with any recommendations you may have as to further steps required for the effective control of the paperwork burden on the public.

Increased efforts to reduce the reporting burden on the public, together with actions being taken by the General Services Administration and other executive agencies aimed at solution of paperwork problems within the Government, will go far toward attaining the desirable objectives of the Hoover Commission's recommendations for improvement of paperwork management. They form a logical and valuable part of the broader responsibility and program of the Bureau of the Budget to bring about better internal business management throughout the Executive Branch.

Sincerely,

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

The Honorable Percival F. Brundage  
Director  
Bureau of the Budget  
Washington, D. C.